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August 4, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: DAVID DEMAREST

FROM: MARK DAVIS

SUBJECT: 200th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT

I. SUMMARY

On Monday, August 7, at 9:35 a.m., you will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Department of War (now incorporated within the Department of Defense) at Fort Myer. With you will be Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, Army Secretary Jack Marsh and Undersecretary Michael Stone. (Mr. Stone's nomination to replace Secretary Marsh is on track, and could receive Senate approval before the speech. We will keep you apprised.)

To your left and right will be DOD employees. Before you will be a review of troops and the press. Since the remarks are between five and seven minutes, no teleprompter is planned.

II. DISCUSSION

This draft uses this opportunity to discuss current defense systems before Congress. In addition, please note the reference to Lt. Col. William R. Higgins. Care has been taken not to try to guess his fate. If you deem it appropriate as Commander-in-Chief, you might consider giving Lt. Col. Higgins an actual salute after giving him a rhetorical one.

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Davis/Wallace  
Aug. 4, 1989  
Title: DOD  
Draft: Three

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: DEPARTMENT OF WAR/FORT MYERS  
Aug. 7, 1989/9:35

Secretary Cheney -- Dick -- I want to thank you for the splendid job you are doing at DOD. ((And by the way, Dick, I hope you are learning how to find your way from the E-ring to your car without getting lost . . . Perhaps now you know why they made a movie about the Pentagon and called it "No Way Out."))

And Secretary Marsh -- Jack -- I want to thank you for your splendid performance in your service to the U.S. Army, and to your country. And finally, I want to congratulate Michael Stone, whom I have chosen to lead the Army into the 1990s.

I am pleased to join with you all in celebrating the 200th anniversary of an historic department, now part of the Department of Defense. In honoring the bicentennial of this Department, we are also honoring the heroes of America's past and present.

The Department of War . . . The very name sounds antiquated, even bellicose. Certainly, today the title Department of Defense is more appropriate, since the purpose of our armed forces is to deter war, not to seek it.

And yet, the title was undeniably forthright, for the War Department fought and won six wars in its 158-year history. It was the War Department that waged the most tragic conflict in American history, a Civil War in which one secretary, Edwin

Stanton, was pitted against one of his predecessors, Jefferson Davis. It was also the War Department that trained and dispatched vast armies of Doughboys to France. And it was the War Department that served as America's nerve center in the struggle against the Axis powers, leading to the greatest military **and** moral victory in our history.

Winston Churchill gave much of the credit for this to Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, calling him the "true organizer of victory." We all remember George Marshall as a great Secretary of State. He deserves no less credit for his service to the Army, and later as Secretary of Defense.

None of us who served in the Second World War will ever forget the great leaders of the War Department. Nor we will forget the great lesson of those years -- **only the strong can keep the peace.**

It is no discredit to the War Department that at the outbreak of the Second World War our armed forces were still drilling with wooden rifles, hauling massive, but useless radios, and planning to wage land warfare with horse cavalry.

Today, of course, it is not a shortage of rifles that threatens to undermine America's ability to keep the peace. To preserve the peace today, we must be strong in other ways. This means we must rely on advanced technology, not the strategic equivalent of horse calvary.

The United States today requires a closely integrated strategic program designed to enhance our strength, bolster

deterrence and facilitate arms control. It demands that we modernize our ICBM force, **redeploying the Peacekeeper missile in rail-garrison now.** ((PAUSE)) And it means completing the development of the new small ICBM, and its deployment when ready. These mobile systems will bring improved survivability and stability to the land-based leg of our strategic triad.

A strong defense also means something else -- **sufficient funding for the Stealth Bomber.** ((PAUSE))

And it means one thing more -- **support for the Strategic Defense Initiative.** ((PAUSE)) SDI offers the promise of a stable nuclear balance that relies increasingly on defense. It provides an incentive for the Soviets to return to the negotiating table, and it will make any START treaty more effective. It represents a firm step toward stability -- the same goal we seek through modernization of our nuclear arsenal, and arms control. This is the program the country needs, **and I will work to see that this is the program that the country gets.**

Just as critical to our nation's defense are the men and women of the Department of Defense. You are called upon to do a difficult, often dangerous, job. And you perform your duty with distinction.

The history of this department is nothing less than the history of American bravery. Whether we call it the Department of War or the Department of Defense, this tradition of service to country lives on in each of you.

So, today, in commemorating the Department of War, we also salute you and every brave American who ever served in the original War Department, in the U.S. Army, and your Air Force and Navy compatriots, now with you in the Department of Defense. We also salute those who served in the two great conflicts of this century, and those who served in Korea and Vietnam. And we cannot leave here today without pausing to salute one who stands as a symbol of the courage that burns in the breast of every American in uniform -- one Marine who has been very much in our thoughts and prayers -- **Lieutenant Colonel William Richard Higgins.** ((PAUSE))

It is an inspiration to be among America's finest. And to honor a great department and its great traditions. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

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